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SUBJECT: MEDIA COVERAGE OF A/S FRAZER VISIT TO ZAMBIA

REF: LUSAKA 463

¶1. Summary. In interviews with Zambian national and international TV, local reporters and major news wire services during a brief visit to Lusaka, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer broadcasted U.S. concerns about the recent Zimbabwean election and spoke out forcefully against violence in post election Zimbabwe. A/S Frazer used her press opportunities to clarify, but not back off from, remarks she had made days before in South Africa that MDC candidate Morgan Tsvangirai had won the March 29 election, stating clearly that she had based her comments on a wealth of post-election tallies by independent observers. Her visit - and her call for a tougher international community stance against President Robert Mugabe - featured prominently in local and international media. End Summary.

¶2. During a brief April 26-27 visit to Lusaka that included meetings with President Levy Mwanawasa and former President Kenneth Kaunda, A/S Frazer sat down for interviews with Associated Press (AP), Reuters, the BBC World Service, Radio France International, and several local Zambian media outlets. In each interview she spoke out forcefully against post-election violence in Zimbabwe and called on the international community, and specifically on SADC, to take a tougher stance against reports of gross human rights abuse. She also continued to emphasize that Zimbabwe's election results should reflect the will of the people. A/S Frazer's statements were picked up and placed prominently on Zambian and international television, radio, print, and internet sites.

¶3. Local media outlets concentrated on Frazer's meeting with President Mwanawasa, and on his role as SADC Chairman. Zambia's most-read newspaper, "The Post" (circulation: 30,000), got an exclusive interview ("US rep, Levy hold talks over Zim crisis") and led with Frazer's concerns about post-election violence. Though the paper has previously criticized Western involvement in the Zimbabwean crisis, their coverage of the A/S visit was accurate and highlighted the A/S' main points. The government-run "Daily Mail" (circulation: 20,000) and "Times of Zambia" (circulation: 25,000) both took their front-page reports from a Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS) reporter who sat in on the AP interview. Both articles mirrored each other (The Times: "America exerts pressure on Zim." The Daily Mail: "Levy urged to pressurise [sic] Mugabe") and both led with A/S talking points about U.S. concern over Zimbabwe violence.

¶4. Zambia National Broadcasting Company television (viewership: 4 million) and radio (listenership: 8 million) broadcasts took advantage of an exclusive interview, and lead by saying "the United States of America has expressed concern over the deteriorating security environment in Zimbabwe." (The TV bulletin also ran a separate clip, featuring A/S comments highlighting the Zambian government's anti-corruption efforts.) A number of popular, privately-owned radio stations mentioned the A/S visit, basing their reports on the ZANIS report.

¶5. Almost as if anticipating A/S Frazer's visit, the Post - Zambia's largest circulation and only independent newspaper ran an editorial calling on Mugabe to hand over power peacefully. This was an unexpected shift in message for The Post, which has traditionally

been a liberation movement stalwart. In fact, the Post's publisher used the opportunity of the PAO's last visit to the newsroom to lambaste the West for its imperial/colonial interference in Zimbabwean politics. The subsequent editorial ("Let the imperialists choke on their frustration") was straight out of Mugabe's past talking points. However, given that they are bordering countries, the lack of original and/or insightful reporting on Zimbabwe from Zambia is a notable disappointment. With the exception of the local angle - President Mwanawasa's role as SADC chairman - most Zimbabwe coverage comes from international wire services. With the visit of the A/S, and given the chance to report directly on the situation, the Zambian media was by and large positive, and accurate, reporting back the A/S' talking points just as she presented them.

MARTINEZ